pleased to refer to the Budget Speech (1988-89) Point 177(f) where special mention was made of raising Customs Duty on Customs Tariff Item 2208.10 as an anti-evasion matter and state:

(a) whether Government are aware that no items are being imported under Tariff Item 3302.10 which has a much lower rate of import duty;

(b) whether Government propose to consider raising the import duty on 3302.10 to the level of 2208.10 as an anti-evasion measure; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) to (c) Import of items falling under sub-heading No. 3302.10 of the Customs Tariff is insignificant. The level of import of these items does not indicate that there is any evasion warranting corrective action by way of increasing the duty to the level of duty applicable to items falling under sub-heading No. 2208.10 of the Customs Tariff.

Export of Cotton from Andhra Pradesh

2404. SHRI PRABHAKAR RAO KALVALA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) what are the details of the quality and quantity of cotton exported from Andhra Pradesh and the amount of foreign exchange earned thereby during 1985 to 1988, year-wise;

(b) whether Government have taken any steps to find out new markets for export of cotton; and

(c) if so what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI RAFIQUE ALAM): (a) Andhra Pradesh State Cooperative Marketing Federation Ltd. exported about 7,000 bales of cotton valued at Rs. 2.08 crores in 1985-86. There were no exports by the Federation in 1986-87 and 1987-88.

(b) and (c) The exports of cotton have been traditionally to Japan, South Korea, Hongkong, Poland etc. In 1986-87, new markets were developed in Turkey, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Belgium etc.

Customs Duty on Computers

2405. SHRI YALLA SESI BHUSHANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the customs duty on computers, computer systems and peripherals;

(b) whether it is a fact that computer systems for educational and research institutions have to bear 98 per cent duty instead of zero per cent;

(c) whether the same duty rate holds good for the Super Computer; and

(d) whether Government propose to waive the duty for producing computer systems for educational institutions and producing super-computer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) and (b) The import duty on computers, computer systems and peripherals is 90 per cent ad-valorem. The same rate is applicable in the case of computer systems for educational institutions. However, research institutions not engaged in any commercial activity can import computer systems duty-free in terms of notification No. 70/81-Customs dated the 28th March, 1981.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) There is no such proposal under consideration.

Customs Clearance for Cargo at Hyderabad

2406. SHRI YALLA SESI BHUSHANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that facilities like storage accommodation, security and handling equipment were available at Hyderabad airport for importing air cargo;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Collector of Customs and Central Excise, Hyderabad recommended to the Central Board of Customs and Central Excise that the Hyderabad Collectorate undertakes the clearance of general import cargo;

(c) whether it is a fact that the trade circles have been representing the matter for nearly three years to sanction customs clearance of the general import air cargo at Hyderabad;

(d) whether it is a fact that the clearance of import cargo facility will not only mean optimum utilisation of the cargo air terminal complex at Hyderabad and fuller utilisation of the carrying capacity of the Indian Airlines and Air India but also the fulfilment of the long felt need of the importers; and

(e) what are the reasons for not according the required sanction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) to (e) Hyderabad airport has been notified as a customs airport for import of certain specified items. Representations have been received from the trade for permitting the import of all general cargo through Hyderabad airport. The Andhra Pradesh State Trading Corporation which is running the aircargo complex at Hyderabad has acquired more space for handling import cargo. The Collector of Customs and Central Excise, Hyderabad recommended the request but has sought sanction of additional staff for handling the extra workload. Government is considering allowing more items which are immediately required by the local trade and industry and Collector of Customs and Central Excise has been asked to identify these items in consultation with the local trade and industry. He has also been asked to get the existing central excise staff trained in a major custom house for handling customs work pending sanction of the additional staff required by him and to make infrastructural arrangements for starting increased import cargo clearance work at short notice in consultation with the other Government agencies concerned.

Drying up of Cherrapunji Area in Meghalaya

2407. SHRI YALLA SESI BHUSHANA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Cherrapunji, the wettest place on earth, is slowly drying up for lack of vegetation;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the area is gradually becoming barren;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the 'Jhum' cultivation practiced by the hill tribals of the North-East has led to large-scale destruction of trees and thereby added to the problem of drying up of the soil; and

(d) if so, what steps Government propose to take to improve the situation?